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The Name of the Deity in the Pentateuch

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THE NAME OF THE DEITY IN THE PENTATEUCH.

WHO is God? Job answers, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job xi. 7). Has God ever been seen? St. John answers, "No man hath seen God at any time" (St. John i. 18). Can He be seen? St. Paul says of God, "Whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. vi. 16). Yet Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Isaiah and others "saw God face to face." What was it, who was it they saw? Man cannot see God, for only God can see God. Man cannot know God, for only God can know God, and only God can reveal God. The answer to the above is enshrined in the knowledge of the LORD. The LORD is God revealed, "God manifest in the flesh." At the same time "the LORD He is God, and "God is the LORD, bind the sacrifice with cords," not two Persons, but One.

Many have wondered why sometimes God, and sometimes LORD is used to express the name of Deity, acting or speaking. Many theories have been advanced, but the simplest reason is to believe that each name in relation to the context has its own special meaning.

The Hebrew word in the Bible translated God is Elohim, and where the name LORD occurs with capital letters it is the translation of the Hebrew word we call Jehovah.

The following facts about these names are clearly defined. Elohim is never said to appear to anyone, except in an historical sense (*e.g.*, Gen. xxxv. 1, 7 with xxviii. 13), and even there when the actual appearance is referred to it is Jehovah who appeared. Altars are built to Jehovah, not Elohim. The first time the name Jehovah occurs by itself is when Eve says, "I have gotten a man (from) Jehovah" (Gen. iv. 1). She naturally thought this child was the Promised One who should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15). In relation to this it is not Elohim our Righteousness, but "Jehovah our

Righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 6). The literal translation of the above passage is "I have gotton a man even Jehovah," thus Luther and others rendered it, whilst the Jewish Targum paraphrases it, "I have gotten a man an angel of Jehovah.

It is very noticeable too that our LORD never addresses God as LORD, because "Jesus Christ is LORD to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 11). Quite in accord with this when on the Cross. He addresses the Father as "My God, My God", quoting Psalm xxii. 1, and not My LORD, My LORD, surely a point in favour of the Bible names of Deity not being recorded by chance of different writers, but inspired and designedly. David writes (Ps. xxiii. 1.) Jehovah is my Shepherd, and so "great David's greater Son" can rightly say "I am the good Shepherd" (St. John x. 14).

Equally striking is the fact that never in the whole Bible, either in the Old or New Testament, does the title "the Son of the LORD" (Jehovah) occur, it is always "the Son of God" (Elohim).

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In like manner we find the title "the Lamb of God" (St. John i. 29); "the Holy One of God" (St. Mark i. 24); not the Lamb of the LORD (Jehovah), nor the Holy One of the LORD (Jehovah). Illustrative of the truth embodied in this is "I will call upon Elohim, and Jehovah will save me" (Ps. lv. 16). It is remarkable also that the phrase "the angels of the LORD" (Jehovah) never occurs in the whole Word of God; "the angels of God" (Elohim) often, though both occur in the singular. This is a fact that bears strongly in favour of "the Angel of the LORD" being definitely one Person, and that Person the second in the Holy Trinity.

As a broad statement Elohim is the God of the Universe, of Creation, the moral Ruler of the world in a general sense, as known by His works; whilst Jehovah is used when speaking of man and the relation of Deity to man—in redemption and atonement, and especially in relation to the chosen seed and race. To Israel, God is Jehovah, in special relationship

to Israel. When Gentiles speak of Deity they use Elohim, *e.g.*, Melchizedek when blessing Abram duly mentions the name "the most high God,' whilst Abram, in replying, speaks of "the LORD (Jehovah). the most high God" (Gen. xiv. 19, &c.). In chapter xx., in relation to Abimelech, a heathen king, the name used both in vision and in speech is Elohim, and the name Jehovah only once, and that in relation to Sarah (verse 18). So too chapter xxi. verses 12—21, in reference to Hagar, and in verses 22—32, relating to Abimelech, Elohim is the name employed, whereas v. 33, Abraham, the Hebrew, calls upon the name of Jehovah. Gentiles speak of Elohim (Judges i. 7; vii. 14), but Gideon uses Jehovah (vii. 15). The ship-master, a Gentile, speaks of Elohim (Jonah i. 6), the prophet, a Jew, speaks of Jehovah (Jonah i. 9). Ehud speaks to Eglon of Elohim, to the Israelites of Jehovah (Judges iii. 20, 28).

In the Pentateuch specially the use of the two names (though strictly Elohim is not a name, but a title, being applied to false gods

as well as the one true and only God), is very interesting as showing evident design.

Genesis i. 1 to ii. 3 Elohim only is used, as the Creator of the world. Gen. ii. 4—iv. 20 Jehovah is used in relation to man, as God in redemption; and to show that there is no difference between Elohim and Jehovah, they are joined in Gen. ii. and iii. chapters, which are anthropomorphic. In these two chapters it is not as in chapter i., "and Elohim said," but Jehovah Elohim Himself who works, pointing to the Second Person in the Holy Trinity, and agreeing with "All things were made by Him (the Word); and without Him was not anything made that was made" (St. John i. 3). Elohim is thus seen "above all," ordaining all and Jehovah "through all" *doing* all, and shewing as Jehovah condescension towards and care for the creation which Elohim created. It cannot be without meaning that Satan uses Elohim (Gen. ii. 1) and not Jehovah, nor that the first time the name Jehovah is used by itself, it is in connexion

with the birth of the first child into the world (Gen. iv. 1). It is quite consistent that only this name should occur throughout the story of Cain and Abel, because it was Satan's first recorded attempt after the Fall, to try and overthrow the plan of redemption that was to be through Jehovah. In Gen. iv. 25 Eve rightly speaks of Elohim, because it was He who "appointed another seed instead of Abel," through whom should come that "seed, which is Christ" (Gal. iii. 16). The next verse 26 says, "then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah." The revelation was opening, men's spiritual perceptions were beginning to develop, as they realized "here a little and there a little," that He who assumed human form, whose "delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 31) was more than man, that Jehovah was the name of the Promised Seed, and that in some mysterious manner He was Elohim, whom they worshipped, but could not see.

In chapter v. 24, "Enoch walked with Elo-

him: and he was not; for Elohim took him," where we should have expected Jehovah. The missing link seems to be supplied in Ecclus. xliv. 16, "he pleased the LORD and was translated, being a pattern of repentance"; and this appears borne out in Gen. vi. 8, 9, "Noah found grace in the eyes of Jehovah—and Noah walked with Elohim." In verse 29 it is Jehovah again when reference is made to Noah, through whom the Promised Seed should come. In chapter vi. 5, GOD is in capital letters, and is equivalent, therefore, to Jehovah; and to the end of the section verse 8, the name Jehovah is continued throughout as connected with the being of man. In verse 11, &c., Elohim occurs as the moral Ruler of the world.

Chapter vii. begins rightly with Jehovah. It cannot be undesignedly that this name is used here in connexion with the call to enter the ark. Jehovah says to Noah, "Come thou." He was the Ark in type. Had God the Father spoken, would He not have said, "Go thou"? Jehovah as God the Son says,

"Come thou." This seems a great truth corroborated by (viii. 15, 16) "God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark." The two words are quite different in the original Hebrew. Whilst Noah was in the ark, shut in by Jehovah, Elohim speaks and acts. but when he comes out he builds an altar, not to Elohim, but to Jehovah as the Mediator. Chapter ix. 1—17 Elohim rightly, as the moral Ruler, speaks and establishes through intermediaries, "the blood," "My covenant," "My bow," &c. In vv. 26, 27, in relation to those who represented the line of the Promised Seed, Jehovah is used; whereas it says, "Elohim shall enlarge Japhet." In x. 9 Nimrod is said to be a mighty hunter "before Jehovah" (*cf.* xiii. 13). The Jerusalem Targum speaks of his sin and his hunting men as being "mighty before Jehovah," and thus an instrument in Satan's hands to destroy perchance the line of the promised Seed; it may be also that "before" may mean "against," as 1 Chron. xiv. 8 where "David went out against them," lit. "before them."

Chapter xi. is anthropomorphic, hence it is Jehovah, not Elohim, who *comes down to see* the tower of Babel; this points to a personal manifestation of Deity. In chapter xii. 7 we find the first mention of a definite appearance, "Jehovah appeared unto Abram," to whom he builds an altar (xiii. 4, 18) as is usual, and not to Elohim, except chapter xxxv. 1, where Elohim tells Jacob to build "an altar unto Elohim, that appeared" to him, but when the actual appearance is referred to it is Jehovah (xxviii. 13). It is right that in xii. 17 Jehovah should plague Pharaoh "because of Sarai Abram's wife," of the Messianic line. In xv. 1 we first read of the Word of Jehovah who came to Abram in a vision. In view of St. John i. 1, &c., the coincidence points to a visible manifestation in assumed human form of the eternal Son of God. In verse 2 occurs for the first time "Lord GOD," the former in small letters and the latter in capitals, the English equivalent of Adonai Jehovah. This special title is always used in the Pentateuch

when addressing Deity (*cf.* verse 8). In verse 6 Abram believes in Jehovah for righteousness (*cf.* Jer. xxiii. 6). Jehovah makes the covenant with Abram (verse 18). In chap. xvi. Sarai speaks of Jehovah, Hagar speaks of Elohim (verse 13). In xvii. 1 Jehovah appears again to Abram, but all through Elohim speaks to him (verses 3, 9, 15, 19), and Elohim goes up (verse 22).

Chap. xviii. opens with another appearance of Jehovah to Abraham, but on looking up he sees not one but three beings, one of whom he addresses, giving the title of Adonai, a plural of excellence. Some Jewish commentators render this Jehovah, supposing that Abraham recognized the Deity of the visitant, though it is strange he does not call him Jehovah, but speaks to Him as Lord (in small letters), and as "the Judge of all the earth" (verse 25); nevertheless, "Abraham stood yet before Jehovah," and "Jehovah went His way" after communing with him. By comparing xviii. 1, 22 and xix. 1, two of the three heavenly visitants

were angels, and the third was Jehovah Himself. Verse 24 says, "Jehovah rained brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven." The Jerusalem Targum paraphrases this "the Word of Jehovah rained down fire and bitumen from the presence of Jehovah." The Council of Sirmium (A.D. 351) explained this passage, "God the Word rained down fire from God the Father," thus seeing a reference to two of the Persons in the Holy Trinity. Some, however, think it is only an expressive way of saying Jehovah rained fire from Himself. Chapter xx. is particularly interesting in its use of the Names of Deity. In verse 3 "Elohim came to Abimelech in a dream by night." It never occurs that Elohim came to any other than Gentiles, or amid Gentile surroundings. Elohim came to Laban (Gen. xxxi. 24); to Balaam (Numb. xx. 9); Elohim came from Teman (Hab. iii. 3). In 2 Chron. i. 7 Elohim appears to Solomon, but even here in the corresponding account in 1 Kings iii. 5, Jehovah appears and Elohim speaks to him

(as also Exod. iii. 4). In Gen. xx. 17, 18 the the Names of Deity are very strikingly used. Abraham prays to ha-Elohim on behalf of Abimelech and his household; not indefinitely to Elohim as unknown to himself, as He no doubt was to the heathen king, but to ha-Elohim, *i.e.*, the true "God"; but it was Jehovah the covenant God that intervened, and so preserved the mother of the Promised Seed. Abraham was thus taught that Jehovah was Elohim, the God of all the earth, and not merely the tribal God of the Hebrews.

Chap. xxi. 1, Jehovah acts, and in verses 2, 4, 6, 12, Elohim speaks, as in chaps. i. compared with ii. iii. In verse 17, &c., Elohim occurs throughout the narrative relating to Hagar, Ishmael and Abimelech, none of these being in the line of the Promised Seed, but Gentiles. In verse 33, Abraham calls upon Jehovah, whom he identifies as the everlasting El, his own God. Chap. xxii. opens up with Elohim, it being a passage like chap. ix. where there is mediation—the fire, the wood, the lamb, the

altar, the ram, the knife and Isaac himself, and the doctrine of vicarious atonement foreshadowed. But when Divine intervention is needed to save Isaac and to accept a substitute, then Jehovah is used. In verse 8 Abraham says "Elohim will provide," (Elohim jireh), in verse 14 he calls the name of the place "Jehovah will provide" (Jehovah jireh). Elohim thus reveals His plan of redemption and salvation through Jehovah—God in revelation. As it is not mentioned that Isaac returned with Abraham (*cf.* verses 6 and 19), we may see in this that he was in type offered up—a type of the sacrifice of Christ.

In chap. xxiv. 3 occurs the next mention of Jehovah, whom Abraham makes the eldest servant of his house (generally taken to be Eliezer of Damascus) swear by, but adding "the God (Elohim) of heaven, and the God (Elohim) of the earth," as showing the more clearly that his God was the one true and only God, Jehovah, which name Eliezer uses when speaking to Laban and Rebekah. In xxv. 11

Elohim blesses Isaac, as the special type of Christ, but Isaac and Rebecca in their need (verses 21, 22), both use the name of Jehovah. In chap. xxvi. 2, 24, Jehovah appears to Isaac, and in the latter case says He is the God (Elohim) of Abraham. It is to Jehovah (verse 12), that Isaac builds an altar. Abimelech, though an heathen, speaks to Isaac of Jehovah, knowing that He was his God and the God of his father Abraham, and possibly for this reason says, "Jehovah was with thee" (verse 28), and "thou art now the blessed of Jehovah" (verse 29). In chap. xxvii. 27, 28 the Names used imply that Elohim looks with favour upon those whom He as Jehovah has blessed. In blessing Esau, Isaac does not mention Deity at all, the blessing being merely temporal. In xxviii. 13 Jehovah appears to Jacob as God (Elohim) of Abraham and Isaac. It is however very striking that when Isaac blesses Jacob (verse 3) he uses Elohim and not as would have been expected Jehovah, and Jacob himself (verse 20, &c.) does the same. The explan-

ation seems to be that at that time Jacob did not know Jehovah (see verse 21) as he afterwards knew Him as the revelation of Elohim. Whilst living in Syria trial and sorrow seems to have deepened his spirituality. Like David (Ps. xviii. 6) "In my distress I called upon Jehovah, and cried unto my God (Elohim): He heard my voice." He learnt that Elohim and Jehovah were one, he called upon Jehovah, and knew that in doing so He was "my God." He seems to have taught this truth to Laban and his family (verses 32, &c). In chap. xxx. 2 Jacob says to Rachel, "Am I instead of Elohim," *i.e.*, am I Jehovah? am I a mediator? Both Leah and Rachel do not confine themselves to the use of either Name, sometimes employing one and sometimes the other. Though when Rachel has her firstborn son she uses the Name of Jehovah.

Laban the Genile, recognizes that Jehovah has blessed him for the sake of Jacob the Hebrew (verse 30). Throughout chap. xxxi. Jacob and Laban speak of Elohim, though Jehovah

speaks to Jacob (verse 3). There is evidently a difference in the mind of Laban between Jehovah, who was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Elohim whom Terah and Nahor their fathers had served before the call of Abraham by Jehovah. In verse 5 Jacob speaks of "the God of his father"; in verse 29 Laban speaks of "the God of Jacob's father." In verse 42 Jacob says, "Except the God (Elohim) of my father, the God (Elohim) of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac had been with me," avoiding the name of Jehovah in addressing Laban, although the latter uses both (verses 49, 50), as still differentiating between the God of Abraham (Jehovah), and the God of Nahor (Elohim), though uniting the two in verse 53 as the one "God of their father," their common ancestor.

In the following chapter Elohim is still used in connexion with Jacob, though he clearly identifies Jehovah as the covenant One (verse 9) but speaks of the angel as Elohim (verse 30) as though not yet truly convinced of the full

nature of Jehovah. In chapter xxxiii. 5, 10, 11, Jacob speaks to Esau of Elohim, and in verse 20 builds an altar to "God, the God of Israel"—*i.e.*, Jehovah. Chap. xxxv. is confined to the use of Elohim, but being historical and referring backwards is quite consistent (*cf.* verses 1, 7, 15 with xxviii. 13, 19; verses 3, 10, 11 with xxxii. 7, 24; verse 9 with Hosea xii. 3—5; and with verse 13 compare xi. 5; xvii. 22). This chapter is a proof that "the LORD he is God," verse 11 identifying Elohim with Shaddai (Almighty), who as Jehovah appeared to Abram (chap. xvii. 1). The same historical use of El Shaddai occurs Exod. vi. 3, a title which was evidently one of great comfort to Jacob, for on his death-bed he again mentions it (xlviii. 3).

The name Jehovah in chapter xxxviii. is specially significant on account of the refusal of the sons of Judah to pass on through them the line of the Promised Seed, Jehovah.

In chapter xxxix., in relation to Joseph, being of the chosen nation, the Name Jehovah

is used, The remaining chapters deal chiefly with the history of Joseph and the children of Israel in connexion with Egypt, which is a type of the world and bondage to sin. The name of Jehovah only occurs in chapter xlix. 18, where its use is surely very striking. Jacob was referring to Dan being a serpent, and his thoughts go back to the primal promise made to Eve (iii. 15), and at once his heart goes out to the Promised Seed who should crush the serpent's head (*cf.* connexion in St. John iii. 14) and suddenly he exclaims, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah." Nor yet could he say as Simeon (St. Luke ii. 29, 30), "I have seen Thy salvation." It is natural that where the story chiefly centres round a heathen people that Elohim should be used.

From chapter xl. onwards, the Name Jehovah does not again occur (except xlix. 18) until the revelation to Moses, when the redemption out of Egypt is first spoken of (Exod. iii.). At once Jehovah appears, and Elohim

speaks, identifying Himself with Jehovah in verse 16. Chapter v. opens with Pharaoh saying, "Who is Jehovah"? and when Moses and Aaron answer they say, "the God of the Hebrews hath met us," speaking of Elohim to the heathen king who uses the same Name when repeating the desire of the Israelites, whilst the latter use the Name of Jehovah in the same connexion. Pharaoh does not know the being of Jehovah, as God in revelation and redemption. From Exod. vi. 3 we gather that the Israelites did not fully realize who Jehovah was. They merely regarded Him as a heavenly visitant, and not as the One true and only God, who was gradually revealing Himself, as the spiritual perceptions of His people could bear it. Jehovah hitherto had on many occasions "appeared," but the appearance in assumed human form did not convince them of His Godhead, no more than when "born of the Virgin Mary," was He recognized as God, the Son of God, beneath the humble garb of the Carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth.

The Jews are still "destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. iv. 6)—the knowing Jehovah as the revelation of Elohim. "They have forsaken the LORD" (Isa. i. 4). In Zeph. iii. 2 it is said of Israel "she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God"; *i.e.* she trusted not in Jehovah, as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and so could not "draw near to Elohim"—a priestly phrase—for pardon and peace. More than fifty times in the prophecy of Ezekiel it is said, "Ye shall know that I am Jehovah." Hereafter they will on their repentance regain this lost experience, as foretold in Hos. iii. 5. Then JEHOVAH will say "they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, JEHOVAH is my God" (Zech. xiii. 13), In other words, "Israel shall be saved in Jehovah with an everlasting salvation," as they recognize in Him, the Holy One. whom their forefathers delivered up to the Gentiles to be crucified, "Elohim manifest in the flesh," the LORD Jesus Christ (Isa. xxv. 9).

We are living in days when the faith once delivered to the saints in its purity, simplicity and perfection is being assailed most often by those who profess and call themselves Christians. Christ is God, the eternal Son of God, and His "delights were with the sons of men." We cannot think that God who loves us never revealed Himself; indeed He has done so from the beginning, and this though we know He is invisible, and that no man hath seen God at any time. His own Word written for our learning at His inspiration makes clear that He Elohim, revealed Himself as Jehovah. But that many at first could not grasp that God Himself was in that form is also clear, especially when the appearance was made as the Angel of Jehovah. Men appear to have known that Jehovah the Coming One was to be a special Seed of the woman, and that He must be more than man, and not less than God, but that the Man to be was the great Almighty God Himself, and that Jehovah was his Name, this was difficult to be understood, and only

comprehended by those whose hearts and consciences were enlightened by the Holy Spirit. When our LORD unveiled His Deity to His disciple Peter He could truly say "flesh and blood hath not revealed it," but the One of whom in later days He said, "He shall glorify Me" (St. John xvi. 14). Then men fully knew God in Christ, God manifest n the flesh, Immanuel, God with us a wonderful gift, God for us in atonement, God in us the hope of glory; and to-day, as in our Holy Communion Service, we can say with all our hearts to the LORD Jesus:—

"Thou only art Jehovah; Thou only, O Messiah, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father."

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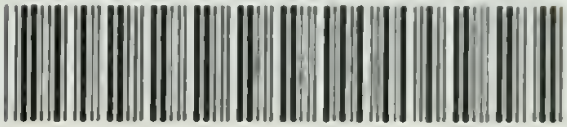

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